

Remarks

This Preliminary Amendment cancels without prejudice original claims 1 - 3 in the underlying PCT Application No. PCT/DE03/00587, as well as cancelling substitute claims 1-2 presented in the annex to the International Preliminary Examination Report, and adds new claims 4 - 5. The new claims conform to U.S. Patent and Trademark Office rules and do not add new matter to the application.

In accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.125(b), the Substitute Specification (including the Abstract, but without the claims) contains no new matter. The amendments reflected in the Substitute Specification (including Abstract) are to conform the Specification and Abstract to U.S. Patent and Trademark Office rules or to correct informalities. As required by 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(b)(3)(ii) and § 1.125(c), a Marked Up Version Of The Substitute Specification comparing the Specification of record and the Substitute Specification also accompanies this Preliminary Amendment. Approval and entry of the Substitute Specification (including Abstract) are respectfully requested.

The underlying PCT Application No. PCT/DE03/00587 includes an International Search Report, dated June 20, 2003, a copy of which is enclosed. The Search Report includes a list of documents that were uncovered in the underlying PCT Application. Also enclosed is a copy of International Preliminary Examination Report dated November 17, 2004, which Report includes a list of documents that were uncovered.

Applicants assert that the subject matter of the present application is new, non-obvious, and useful. Prompt consideration and allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

KENYON & KENYON

Dated: 1/5/05

By: 

Richard L. Mayer
(Reg. No. 22,490)

One Broadway
New York, NY 10004
(212) 425-7200

CUSTOMER NO. 26646

K. No.
36.197)

DEVICE FOR TRIGGERING IGNITION CIRCUITS

5 ~~Background Information~~ Field of the Invention

The present invention ~~is based on an~~ relates to a device for triggering ignition circuits ~~according to the species defined in the independent claim.~~

Background Information

10 German Patent Application Document No. 101 09 620.8, ~~which was not pre-published,~~ describes a device for triggering ignition circuits, where a positive and negative output stage of, in each instance, different substrates are used for an ignition circuit.

15 ~~Summary of the Invention~~ Summary

The device of the present invention for triggering ignition circuits, ~~having the features of the independent claim,~~ possesses provides the advantage over the ~~related~~ prior art in that the present device is more cost-effective, since the
20 cross-coupled, positive and negative output stages are now situated on a single substrate. In this context, the modularity of the set-up is also considerably increased. A gain in reliability is achieved, which is more significant than that of the known design approaches not having the cross
25 coupling of the present invention, because the positive and negative output stages, along with their corresponding ignition-circuit diagnostics and triggering, may be implemented independently of each other.

~~The measures and refinements specified in the dependent claims allow for advantageous improvements of the device for triggering ignition circuits indicated in the independent claim.~~

5 It is particularly advantageous that the geometric distance between the positive and negative output stages of the same ignition circuit on the substrate is maximized. In this manner, the reliability is increased, since as long a distance as possible between the positive and negative output stages
10 for the same ignition circuit produces a high degree of independence from manufacturing tolerances, which may be localized on a portion of the substrate.

In addition, it is advantageous that a pair of positive and negative output stages may have the same power supply. This
15 produces a considerable circuit-engineering advantage and simplifies the design.

~~Brief Description of the Drawing~~ Brief Description of the Drawings

~~An exemplary embodiment of the present invention is depicted in the drawing and explained in detail in the following description.~~
20

~~The figures show:~~

Fig. 1 shows a block diagram of a pair of positive and negative output stages according to the present invention,
25 and.

Fig. 2 shows a block diagram of an example embodiment of the device according to the present invention.

~~Description~~ Detailed Description

Figure 1 shows a block diagram of a pair of positive and negative output stages according to the present invention. A drive circuit 2 is connected to a positive output stage 1. Positive output stage 1 is connected to a firing pellet (ignition circuit) 3 and a diagnostic unit 4 via its other output. On the other side, firing pellet 3 is connected to a diagnostic unit 5 and a negative output stage 6. Negative output stage 6 is triggered, in turn, by a drive circuit 7.

Therefore, the ignition ~~circuit~~ system is formed by positive output stage 1, firing pellet 3, and negative output stage 6. Added to this are diagnostic units 4 and 5, as well as drive circuits 2 and 7. Firing pellet or ignition circuit 3 is powered by the positive and negative output stages, which are switched through in the case of firing, in order to provide the ignition circuit with the ignition current. The positive output stage is referred to as such, since the supply voltage is connected to it, while the negative output stage is connected to ground. A separate drive circuit for positive and negative output stages 1 and 6 ensures that the positive and negative output stages of a pair may be cross-coupled to other positive and negative output stages of other pairs, in order to power a firing pellet. In this case, the positive and negative output stages of a pair have a common power supply. As an alternative, separate power supplies are also possible.

Figure 2 shows an example embodiment of the device of the present invention in a block diagram. A pair of positive and negative output stages is situated in a block 12. Other pairs blocks 13 and 14 are schematically represented underneath it block 12, i.e., blocks 13 and 14 are covered by block 12 in Figure 2. The positive output stage is formed by a positive output-stage transistor 8, which is connected via a terminal 10 to a firing pellet 18, whose other output is connected to terminal 15, which in turn belongs to a negative output stage

that is situated in a different pair. This is pair 13. Also connected to terminal 10 is a diagnostic unit 4, which belongs to positive output-stage transistor 8. Here, a negative output-stage transistor 9 of pair 12 is not connected to a firing pellet. However, it is possible to connect it to such a firing pellet, which is connected to a different positive output-stage transistor of another pair, in order to achieve cross coupling. Negative output-stage transistor 9 has its own diagnostic unit 5 at its terminal. A further firing pellet 17 is connected to a positive output-stage transistor of pair 13 via terminal 11. On its other side, firing pellet 17 is connected to a terminal 16 of pair 14, in order to be connected here to the negative output stage of pair 14. The diagnostic blocks assigned to the positive and negative output-stage transistors are connected to terminals 11, 15, and 16.

The base or the gate of transistors 8 and 9, and of the transistors of pairs blocks 13 and 14 that are covered ~~in this case~~ by block 12 in Figure 2, is activated by a processor, in order to appropriately switch these transistors through. Transistors 8 and 9, as well as the covered ones of blocks 13 and 14, are switched through, in order to trigger firing pellets 17 and 18 in case restraining devices should be activated. In the normal case, i.e., when firing pellets 17 and 18 should not be triggered, diagnostic units 4 and 5, as well as the covered diagnostic units of pairs blocks 13 and 14, carry out diagnostic measurements of firing pellets 17 and 18. In this context, firing pellets 17 and 18 are measured for resistances that are too large or too small. The resistances are measured, using voltages that decrease on the basis of diagnostic currents at firing pellets 17 and 18. If the voltages at firing pellets 17 and 18 exceed specified values, then firing pellets 17 and 18 are behaving erratically, and

the ~~method~~ of stable functioning of firing pellets 17 and 18 is endangered, and therefore the use of the restraining devices, as well. In some instances, this then results in a warning or the switching-off of the restraining devices.

- 5 Drive circuits 2 and 7 are driver circuits, which are activated by the processor in the case of triggering. Therefore, drive circuits 2 and 7 are connected to the gate or the base of transistors 8 and 9.

Abstract

ABSTRACT

~~Provided is a~~ A device for triggering ignition circuits is
provided, a coupling being provided between a positive output
stage and negative output stage of different pairs. Each
5 positive and each negative output stage is assigned a
diagnostic unit and a drive circuit.

~~(Figure-2)~~